

Wisconsin Recommended Assessment Guidelines for Local School District Use for Title I Paraprofessionals

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Introduction

The Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (ESEA) of 2001 requires that all paraprofessionals working in Title I schools must be highly qualified.

The reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the No Child Left Behind Act, requires each local education agency receiving assistance to ensure that all paraprofessionals hired after the date of enactment of the ESEA (January 8, 2002) and working in a program supported with funds under this part shall have —

- (A) completed at least 2 years of study at an accredited institution of higher education that is equivalent to at least 48 semester hours; **or**
- (B) obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; **or**
- (C) met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate, through a formal state or local academic assessment
 - (i) knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics; or
 - (ii) knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness, as appropriate.

All paraprofessionals hired on or before January 8, 2002, must satisfy the requirements by January 8, 2006.

To address the long term needs of school districts and paraprofessionals, the Department of Public Instruction developed *Wisconsin Recommended Assessment Guidelines for Local School District Use for Paraprofessionals*. The intent of this document is to serve as a guideline to assist the local school district to meet the ESEA requirements related to the third option – meeting a rigorous standard. Determining the qualifications of paraprofessionals are local district responsibilities.

The guidelines in this document provide flexibility to respond to varied educational needs and situations in meeting the ESEA requirements for paraprofessionals. This document was developed by numerous educators, administrators, paraprofessionals, and content specialists. Thus, reflecting the multiple approaches used in Wisconsin schools.

Wisconsin Recommended Assessment Guidelines for Local School Districts Use for Title I Paraprofessionals consists of three parts:

1. ESEA Requirements
2. Recommended Assessment Guidelines
3. Sample Items

Local districts/schools can use the different parts to develop their local assessment system for paraprofessionals. Local districts/schools may continue using any existing systems that were developed locally or purchased providing that they meet the ESEA requirements.

To Whom Do the ESEA Requirements for Paraprofessionals Apply?

The ESEA legislation applies according to the table below:

JOB DUTIES	DOES ESEA APPLY?
Schoolwide Title I Program, all paraprofessionals	YES
Title I Targeted Assistance Program, only paraprofessionals funded by Title I	YES
English/ESL translator	NO
Schoolwide Title I, parent involvement activities	NO
Paraprofessionals who are in neither a school-wide nor a targeted Title I program	NO
Paraprofessionals who conduct parent involvement activities	NO
Paraprofessionals who act as a translator	NO

Verification of Compliance Under the ESEA Requirements for Paraprofessionals

The principal of each school operating a Title I Schoolwide or Title I Targeted Assistance program has the responsibility to attest annually in writing as to whether such school is in compliance with the requirements of ESEA regarding paraprofessionals. Copies of attestations shall be maintained at each school operating a Title I program and at the main office of the local educational agency. This information should be made available to any member of the general public upon request. An attestation form template is available in Appendix A.

Definition of Paraprofessionals Under the ESEA

Under ESEA, a paraprofessional is an individual with instructional support duties working under the supervision of a highly qualified teacher. Individuals who work solely in non-education roles, such as food service, cafeteria or playground supervision, clerical, personal care services, and non-regular education computer assistance are not considered to be paraprofessionals for Title I and IDEA purposes.

Duties of Paraprofessionals under the ESEA

A paraprofessional covered under ESEA may perform the following duties: (1) one-on-one tutoring for eligible students, if the tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher; (2) assisting in classroom management; (3) assisting in computer instruction; (4) conducting parent involvement activities; (5) providing instructional support in a library or media center; (6) acting as a translator; and (7) providing

instructional services to students. If paraprofessionals only translate and/or provide parent involvement activities, they are not required to meet the provision of ESEA. A paraprofessional may not provide any instructional support service to a student unless the paraprofessional is working under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher which means the following:

1. The teacher plans the instructional activities that the paraprofessional carries out;
2. The teacher evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working; and
3. The paraprofessional works in close proximity to the teacher, communicating on an on-going basis.

Assessment of Paraprofessionals Working Under the ESEA Title I-funded Positions

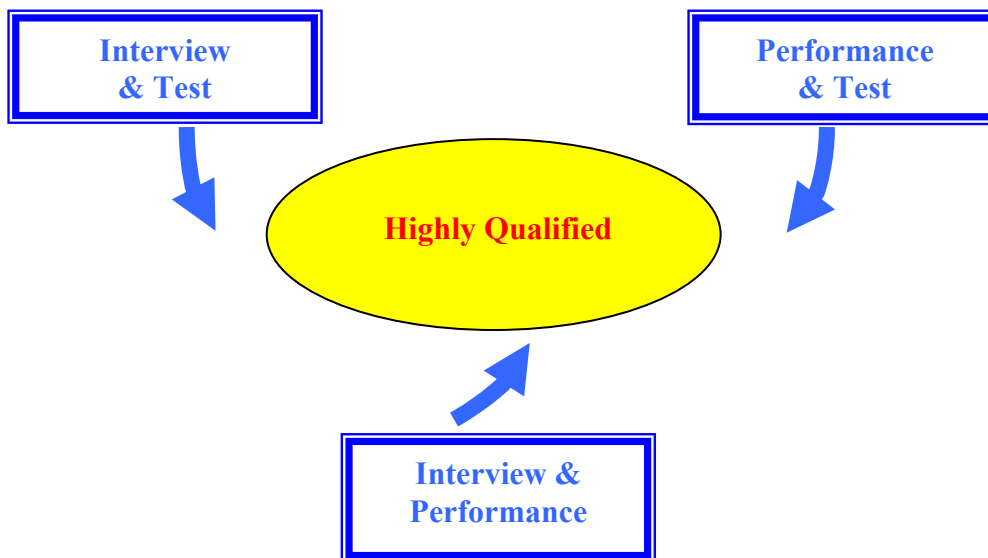
ESEA does not require a paper-and-pencil test for assessing paraprofessional quality. However, there must be evidence that the assessment of paraprofessionals is valid and reliable. The assessment results must be documented; i.e., a record exists of the assessment and the individual's performance on that assessment. The local educational agency determines the content and conduct of the assessment of paraprofessional quality.

The recommended assessment system consists of three options. A paraprofessional will be regarded highly qualified if he/she takes and passes any two of the three options listed below (see Figure 1).

These options are:

- 1. Test in reading, writing, and mathematics**
- 2. Interview**
- 3. Performance (demonstrated through observation or documentation)**

Figure 1: The Paraprofessional Assessment System



The reliability and validity of the assessment options can be addressed by being thorough, appropriate, fair, consistently applied, and defensible. Records of assessment should be kept throughout the duration of the NCLB. DPI recommends the involvement of reading, mathe-

matics, and language arts/English teachers, administrators, and parents in the assessment development.

Local Assessment Portability

School districts are encouraged to develop policies related to portability of assessment results within the district. Districts may provide assessment documentations to other school districts if requested to do so by the paraprofessional. Because local school districts have the authority to determine the assessment measure and standard for paraprofessionals, a school district is not obligated to accept the assessment results from another district as verification of an individual being a highly qualified paraprofessional.

It is recommended that upon successful completion of the assessment, every paraprofessional should be given written documentation of successful completion of the ESEA requirements (see sample in Appendix B).

Recommendations for Assessment Options and Sample Assessment Materials

The remainder of this document focuses on recommendations for:

1. Test items in reading, writing, and mathematics
2. Interview
3. Performance (demonstrated through observation or documentation)

Recommendations for Testing Option

The ESEA guidelines indicate that the content of the assessment for paraprofessionals should reflect both the state academic standards and the skills expected for the child at a given school level (elementary, middle, high school). **It is required that paraprofessionals demonstrate reading, writing, and mathematics skills to be adequate to work with students to whom are assigned.**

The test should include reading, mathematics, and writing. Districts/schools can develop a local test using appropriate items. Tests not designed for basic skills should be approached with caution. In addition, many testing companies do not recommend their testing instruments for determining employment. Districts/schools can select test items from their curriculum and/or textbooks. Furthermore, districts/schools are encouraged to determine a reasonable level of performance. Reading, writing, and mathematics items do not have to stand alone in the test; they can be combined into an integrated approach to assess two or three components using inclusive items. For example, test items 1, 2, 3, 4 of the reading section (see pages 11 and 12) may be used for both reading and writing.

A collection of test items is available on the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) website <http://nces.ed.gov/>. DPI has permission from NCES to utilize the test items, which are used to assess students as part of National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). When selecting items from this collection, make certain that the items are appropriate to the level of assistance to be provided by the paraprofessional and include an acknowledgement of NCES every time NAEP items are used. Many test items from the discontinued Wisconsin Pupil Assessment Program are available for use by districts/schools upon request from DPI.

The committee recommended that the test should have 15-25 items. An ideal test might consist of ten mathematics items, ten reading items, and one writing prompt. The test should be approximately 30 to 45 minutes in length.

All items should be appropriate to the school level of the students being assisted. The following enumeration indicates what might be appropriate to measure the reading, writing, and mathematics skills:

- the reading test should measure reading comprehension;
- the writing test should measure basic grammar, sentence structure, and ability to organize ideas; and
- the mathematics test should measure understanding of basic computation, basic geometry, basic algebra, use of fractions, rounding and estimating numbers, reading graphs, and solving simple word problems.

Sample Testing Items

Some sample items have been composed by DPI using the collection of test items developed by NCES and some items from the discontinued Wisconsin Pupil Assessment Program.

The sample items are for reviewing purposes only, and *should not* be used as part of the paraprofessional assessment.

Reading Passages

Story 1

Running back Terry Manders and tailback Leroy Heller each scored touchdowns as North High's powerful football team defeated South High School, 27-0, at City Stadium Thursday evening.

It was a game of mistakes for both teams. Some were to be expected, but others left the coaches of each team extremely disappointed. South had six passes intercepted, and suffered several minor injuries, including a leg injury to halfback and punter John Melcore.

North muffed several scoring opportunities, fumbled four times, and had two passes intercepted. "We won, but I'm not satisfied," said coach Bill Wrens of North. "I expect our players to do better next week."

All in all, it was a good game for North, but in order to beat the strong Wildcats of Jackson High next Friday, they will have to cut down on mistakes.

Story 2

Mistakes, injuries, some lucky breaks for North high School, and some questionable calls by officials spelled defeat for South High's Rebels in Thursday's league opener at City Stadium.

South High quarterback Bill Nevers suffered a minor hand injury in the first quarter of the game and never returned. North took advantage of the situation by intercepting six passes thrown by backup quarterback, sophomore Andy Sutherland.

Dave Thompson, coach of the South Rebels, expressed anger at the lopsided score. "We lost, but deserved a lot better. It's a shame these kids had so many bad breaks because of poor officiating."

Next week South faces Morgantown at old City Field. The kickoff is at 7:00 p.m.

The Reading items were adapted from Wisconsin Pupil Assessment Program, 1985

Refer to the Reading Passages to answer the following questions:

1. Which of the following would be the best headline for Story 1?

- a. North High Beats South
- b. North High Coach satisfied
- c. North High fumbles away victory
- d. Halfback injures leg

2. Story 2 was most likely written by a newspaper reporter from

- a. North High
- b. Jackson High
- c. Morgantown High
- d. South High

3. In Story 1, what caused Bill Wrens to be dissatisfied?

- a. North made too many mistakes
- b. South made too many mistakes
- c. North won by only 27 points
- d. South had eight passes intercepted

4. Why was Coach Thompson of South angry?

- a. His team lost to North High
- b. He thought the officiating was poor
- c. South intercepted three passes
- d. His quarterback injured his hand

Sample Items: Mathematics

1. Which of the following numbers, when rounded to the nearest thousand, becomes 27,000?

- a. 26,099
- b. 26,490
- c. 27,381
- d. 27,550
- e. 27,640

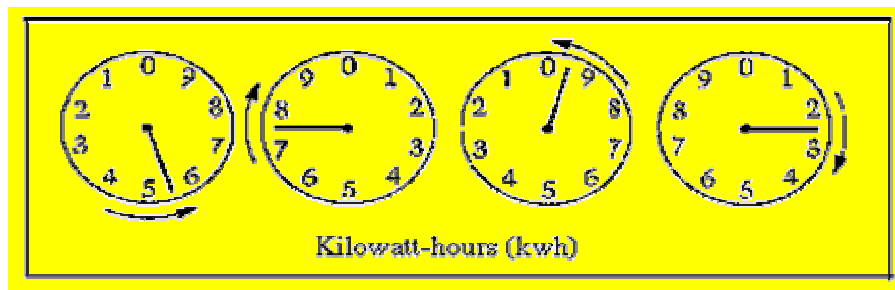
2. A bag contains two red candies and one yellow candy. Kim takes out one, and then Jeff takes out one candy. For each sentence below, fill in the circle to indicate whether it is possible or not possible.

Possible

Not Possible

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Kim's candy is red and Jeff's candy is red. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Kim's candy is red and Jeff's candy is yellow. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Kim's candy is yellow and Jeff's candy is red. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Kim's candy is yellow and Jeff's candy is yellow. |

- 3.

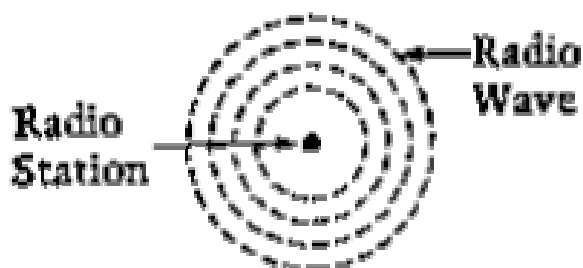


The following steps are used to read the electric meter shown above.

1. On each dial, the pointer moves in the direction of the arrow for that dial.
2. On each dial, the number that the pointer has just passed is that dial's reading.
3. To obtain the meter reading, the dials are read from left to right.

What is the reading on the meter?

- a. 2,975 kwh
 - b. 3,086 kwh
 - c. 5,792 kwh
 - d. 5,803 kwh
 - e. 6,803 kwh
4. **Radio station KMAT in Math City is 200 miles from radio station KGEO in Geometry City. Highway 7, a straight road, connects the two cities. KMAT broadcasts can be received up to 150 miles in all directions from the station and KGEO broadcasts can be received up to 125 miles in all directions. Radio waves travel from each radio station through the air, as represented below.**

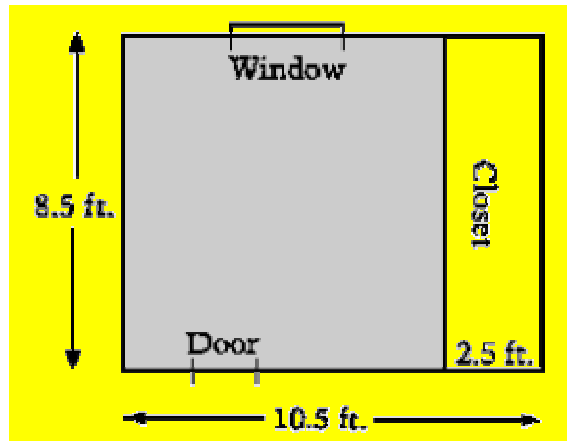


In the space below, draw a diagram that shows the following.

- Highway 7
- The location of the two radio stations
- The part of Highway 7 where both radio stations can be received

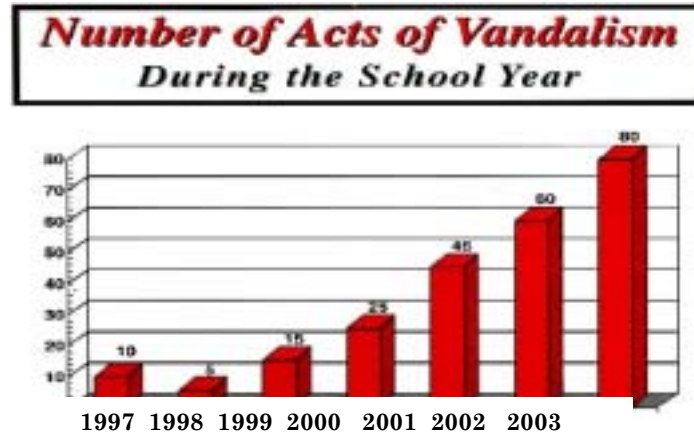
Be sure to label the distances along the highway and the length in miles of the part of the highway where both stations can be received.

5. Chris wishes to carpet the rectangular room shown below. To the nearest square yard, how many square yards of carpet will be used in carpeting the floor of the room if the closet floor will not be carpeted? (1 square yard = 9 square feet).



- a. 8
- b. 13
- c. 15
- d. 19
- e. 22

Sample Item: Writing



Your school board is studying ways to reduce vandalism (destruction of property) at your school. You have been appointed as a student advisor to write a one-page letter to the school board about the problem of vandalism and how to solve it.

To help you get started, your school board has given you the chart which provides information about the extent of vandalism in your school. The school board wants you to discuss ways to prevent some of the different types of vandalism, which include writing graffiti, destroying furniture, breaking windows, and damaging trees, athletic fields, and fences. In your letter, describe the extent of vandalism in your school and discuss what you think are the main reasons for vandalism.

Writing Scoring Guide

Districts that have a set of criteria for scoring writing performance are encouraged to use their criteria to evaluate the writing performance of paraprofessionals. Districts may also consider using the NAEP scoring guide for writing which can be found at this website <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/writing/>.

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1994-1998 Reading, 1996 Mathematics, and 1998 Writing.

Sample
Do Not Use

Sample for Interview Option

A second option for the paraprofessional assessment can take the form of a formal interview. This will help the evaluator and the paraprofessional to come to an understanding of strengths and weaknesses. The interview can be in person, over the phone, or through any other distance technology forms such as video-conferencing.

The interview may include questions such as:

1. Describe your background in working with children.
2. Of the child-related experiences listed on your application, which did you enjoy the most? Why?
3. What do you feel is your major strength in working with children?
4. Are there any aspects in your working with children that you feel need some improvement? How would you like to focus in improving them?
5. How would you communicate about children's progress or behavior to others?
6. What qualities will you bring to this job that will help work effectively with others?
7. Do you have any experience with working with children with special needs?
8. Do you have experience or training in assisting with instruction in the following?
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Mathematics

The interviewer may consider the following:

Does the interviewee display an ability to communicate and listen appropriately, and express thoughts effectively?

Sample for Performance Option

The performance assessment option can be measured through a variety of means, including:

1. direct **observation** of the paraprofessional's work in assisting students;
2. a review of **portfolio** or documents that show evidence of the paraprofessional's demonstrated ability, or
3. an assessment of the paraprofessional's **ability to correct typical errors** in student work at the appropriate grade level.

These approaches may be implemented through:

1. Classroom **observation**, on the job evaluation in assisting students in reading, writing, and mathematics

Performance in any of these approaches could be evaluated through the following criteria:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| • Good use of language | • Stays on task |
| • Getting along with others | • Task completion |
| • Concern for children's well-being | • Follows teacher plans |
| • Ability to handle stress | • Organizational skills |
| • Ability to demonstrate flexibility | • Self-confidence |
| • Communication skills, including listening and oral communication | • Rapport with students |

A sample observation checklist for educational activities that can be used to rate the experience and the preparation of paraprofessionals is included (see Appendix C).

2. **Portfolio**
 - Letters of recommendation
 - Documentation showing ability to assist students in reading, writing, and/or mathematics
 - Documentation of relevant training
 - Previous evaluations
 - Resume
 - Other relevant materials

3. Demonstration of **ability to make relevant corrective comments** on a student's work sample in reading, writing, and mathematics. Paraprofessional responses can be given orally or in writing. A **Sample Performance Instrument** follows.

The ability to assess paraprofessionals using performance based items can be done by allowing paraprofessionals to make corrective comments on student work samples in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Following are samples of a student's work in writing and mathematics. Your task is to find and make all necessary corrections and explain why.

Sample 1: Writing

The student was given the following assignment. The assignment and student's answer follows.

A public television network is seeking ideas for a new series of shows that would be educational for teenagers. The series will include ten one-hour episodes and will be shown once a week. Some of the titles under consideration are:

"Great Cities of the World"

"Women in History"

"Nature Walks"

"American Legends"

Choose one of these titles. Write a letter to the network president describing your ideas for a new educational series. In your letter, describe what one episode might be like. Use specific examples of what information you would include in the episode so the network president will be able to imagine what the series would be like.

Dear Network president,

I think that I have a new show for your network. It's called Great Cities of the World. The show is about four teenagers, around the ages of fourteen to seventeen who travel around the world. In each show they travel to two cities. When they arrive in the city they will first talk about the cities history and what it is like now in the present. They talk about some of the traditions in the city. For example if the students went to Paris, France they would talk about France's past and some of the things they do in there daily lives. They could talk about the people, what they look like and their styles. To keep the show interesting you can show things such as we learn how to say a word from their language or meet many different people from their city. Also to keep the show interesting they can have problems

Sample 2: Mathematics

The student was given this exercise.

In order to conserve energy one can put weather strips around the window to prevent heat loss. How much weather stripping must you purchase to go around a 70 inch by 90 inch window?

The student's answer is 6300 inches. The teacher said this is wrong.

How would you explain to the student the procedure to reach the correct answer?

Sample
Do Not Use

Appendix A

Paraprofessional Compliance

School Report

Year 2____ – 2____

Paraprofessionals hired after the date of enactment, January 8, 2002, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) must have a high school diploma or GED and:

- At least two years of higher education, or
- Obtained an Associate's (or higher) degree, or
- Met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate, through a formal assessment: knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing and mathematics.

Existing paraprofessionals must meet these requirements within four years (2005-06). Section 1119 (i) states that the principal of each school operating a program under Section 1114 (SWP) or Section 1115 (TAS) attest annually in writing as to whether such school is in compliance with the requirements of this section, Qualifications for Paraprofessionals.

Name of District: _____ **Number of District:** _____
Name of School: _____ **Name of Principal:** _____

Please Check one

1. ☐ All paraprofessionals are highly qualified.
2. ☐ Not all paraprofessionals are highly qualified.

Provide the following information regarding programs supported by Title I funds

1. ☐ Total number of paraprofessional(s), excluding exemptions.*
2. ☐ The number of paraprofessional(s) who are highly qualified.

Exemptions:

1. ☐ Number of paraprofessional supported by Title I funds whose duties consist solely of conducting parent involvement activities or translating for ESL/ELL*.
2. ☐ Number of other non-instructional aide(s) supported by Title I funds.

 Signature of Principal

 Date

Name	Duty*	Method of Qualification**	Not Highly Qualified	Plan to become Highly Qualified**

***Duties of Paraprofessionals:**

1. Instructional services under direct supervision of a teacher.
2. One-on-one tutoring during a time when students would not otherwise be receiving instruction from teacher.
3. Classroom management assistance
4. Assistance with instructional materials organization
5. Assistance in computer labs
6. Support in library or media center
7. Parent involvement activities – exempted from qualifications
8. Serves as a translator – exempted from qualifications

****Qualifications of Paraprofessionals:**

1. High School/GED and Formal Local Assessment
2. High School/GED and 2 years of Higher Education
3. High School/GED and Associate's Degree

Appendix B
Paraprofessional Certificate for ESEA Requirements

PARAPROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE

Granted To

Name _____

This verifies the paraprofessional named above satisfies the requirements for paraprofessionals under ESEA through one of the following:

- ☐ **2-years of higher education at _____**
- ☐ **Associates degree or higher from _____**
- ☐ **Formal/Local assessment through _____**

(Principal)

(Date)

(District)

(School)

Appendix C

Sample Observation Checklist: Educational Activities

Name_____

Observer_____

Date_____

Rating Guide

Does The Paraprofessional:	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1. Give good/clear directions		
2. State clearly what the student is expected to do		
3. Follow the lesson plans developed by the teacher		
4. Support instruction sequentially		
5. Stay on task		
6. Use appropriate prompts to stimulate responses		
7. Provide reinforcement in a timely and consistent manner and use praise effectively		
8. Maintain control of the instructional support situation		
9. Prepare instructional materials as directed by the teacher prior to starting the lesson		
10. Use a varied instructional activities suggested by the teacher		
11. Maintain accurate records		
Comments:		

Based on materials developed by the NRC for Paraprofessionals.